

BELIEVES draws record crowd to learn “What did Jesus say about business that you may not BELIEVE ... and is simply REMARKABLE?”

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This is the seminal question David Salyers, VP of Marketing for Chick-fil-A posed to the 65+ business leaders who attended BELIEVES in Christ the King Cathedral's Kenny Hall on Tuesday, January 14, 2014.

The early morning session got underway with “A prayer for witness” led by Father John Howren from Christ the King, who closed the prayer with a call to serve.

“Enlivened by the Spirit, may we go forth in peace of the Holy Spirit to love and serve you through your Son our Lord, Jesus Christ who lives and reigns forever and ever, Amen,” Father John prayed.

After the prayer, Salyers, who has been with Chick-fil-A for over 31 years, quickly began engaging the audience in an exercise that was very telling.

“I want you to pair up with someone and see how many rows of X’s and O’s you can get on the sheet of paper I give you in 5-10 minutes,” Salyers instructed.

When the participants had spent several minutes on the exercise, Salyers got everyone’s attention and revealed the lesson the exercise brings to light.



“So often, when we approach a situation like this, we compete against one another,” Salyers said. “But the alternative is to work together, as I see many of you did.”

He added, “You see, what Jesus said about business that you may not BELIEVE and is simply REMARKABLE, is that it is better to give than to receive.”

After mentioning this he pulled out a \$20 bill and stuck it to his forehead to illustrate his next key point.

“When you enter into a retail or fast food establishment, this is what you look like to the person who works there – a human ATM with a purpose of spitting money to the business,” Salyers said. “The fundamental business issue involved here is this is set up as an acrimonious, adversarial relationship. Does it have to be this way.”

Salyers said Chick-fil-A’s mission is focused on the truth that every life has a story and “our goal is to improve their story.”

“It has got to be about ‘how do we create value, instead of extract value.’” Salyers said.

“At Chick-fil-A, in your businesses, we are not just in business to make a dollar. Rather we are given a platform to make a difference in the lives of those we serve,” Salyers emphasized.

To illustrate, Salyers told the story of a Chick-fil-A operator in Kansas City who asked and wrestled with the question, “How do we improve the life of those we serve.”

“In a fast food restaurant, what do you think the goal of the \$0.99 kids’ meal is?” Salyers asked. “It is to get adults to pay full price. This operator wanted to know ‘what could we do if we don’t want to do a \$0.99 meal.’”

It turns out, the operator personally loves to do daddy/daughter date nights with his daughters. So what ended up happening? He and his team put together the first Chick-fil-A daddy/daughter date night.

As the plans for the evening came together, the community got wind of what was going on, and other businesses – like a florist wanting to provide flowers for the occasion – started to call offering to help.

“When you do the right thing for the right reason, it is amazing how God orders things,” Salyers commented. “This operator wanted to do more than sell food – he wanted to create happiness.”

On Friday at 9 AM the day before the event, the website that was set up for the event opened up for dads and daughters to make reservations. By 5 PM that day, all 700 slots had been sold out and a waiting list had formed.

The next night, as the dads and daughters arrived, they were welcomed by greeters and walked down a red carpet to the host stand where they were received, the daughters were given flowers, and they were escorted to their tables.

“Everyone involved really sought to embrace, ‘how do I make this a magical night?’” Salyers said.

This operator had thought the entire evening through so much that at each table the dad had a placemat of questions to ask his daughter and the daughter had a placemat to write down her answers.

“When a dad sits down with a daughter, one thing that is likely not to happen is a conversation,” Salyers shared as he spoke about the placemats that were created. “And when mom would ask the dad later if he and his daughter did have a conversation,” Salyers chuckled, “dad could show the placemat to mom for proof.”

The event was such a huge success that the Chick-fil-A team received an 87% response rate to the post-event surveys.

“Many times it is the simple things that are the meaningful things in life,” Salyers said. “Isn’t it ironic that God chooses the least of these – like a fast food restaurant – to enrich a life?”

The 65+ leaders in attendance were clearly moved by the story of the operator in Kansas City.

One attendee, Mid Thorne, VP at Wells Fargo, later commented, “I am thinking at Wells Fargo I can’t do daddy/daughter date night, but I don’t have to do what he did. I can do what I can do.”



Salyers then made things more personal for each leader, posing three questions for them to wrestle with at their tables:

- Why is WORK a very UN-remarkable experience for most people?
- Why do most people have a goal to retire early?
- What would it take to create the job you wouldn't want to retire from?

One table of business leaders wrestled quite a bit with the first question.

"I think it is a matter of feeling I have to do it, versus I want to do it," said John Brogan, VP at Blackrock

Jeff Nolde, VP at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, added, "It's funny how it is like we're on a treadmill and we end up chasing something that we never get to. The clients I work with who are most peaceful are the ones who it seems can step back and be grateful. That's when we realize we already have it."

"I can relate to the treadmill," commented Jay Wolverton, CEO and President of Wolverton and Associates engineering firm. "As a business owner, I am constantly wrestling with providing opportunities for employees, growing the business, doing the right thing, and more. It is tough to balance."

The table discussions went on for several more minutes, but then Salyers called everyone's attention back together to close with some final thoughts.

"The question we have to wrestle with is, how can I use the platform God's given me for His purpose," Salyers said.

And how does this happen? How do we know when we're working for a REMARKABLE company like this?

"REMARKABLE companies have REMARKABLE culture," Salyers answered. "The single most powerful element is culture. The Bible talks more about culture, than it does about business."

And what is a REMARKABLE culture?

"Where people believe the best IN each other, they want the best FOR each other, and expect the best FROM each other," Salyers said.

If you would like to have a REMARKABLE experience, be sure to attend BELIEVES on Tuesday, February 11 when Besty Orr, General Partner for LOBOCK LLC will lead another engaging discussion on "Ready to Testify? Developing and Sharing your 30-second and 3-minute Faith Testimony."

To reserve your spot, register today at www.cathedralofchristtheking.org/BELIEVES.

